



Bonsai & Stone Appreciation

2024 Q1



**A Recap of the 2023 BCI
Annual Bonsai Convention
in China**

Bonsai on the Bayou is Coming to Houston

Crespi Cup 2023: Bonsai and Suiseki

The 25th TBCA

Bonsai Exhibition & Competition

Women in Bonsai:

**Challenging Assumptions
and Celebrating Trailblazers**

**Tatsumaki: Bjorn Bjorholm's
Bonsai Legacy**

Crafting a Daiza

Huaxinsi Yang Jianzuo, Bonsai Paradise, China
"Time Cantabile,"

Hinoki Cypress, *Chamaecyparis obtusa*.

Gold Award: BCI 2023 Annual International
Convention.

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President's Message

Dear cherished members of the BCI family. As we step into the promising embrace of 2024, I trust each of you had a joyful holiday season surrounded by the warmth of family and friends. With gratitude in my heart, I'd like to take a moment to reflect on the remarkable journey we've shared throughout 2023 and express my sincere appreciation to every individual who contributed to our collective success.

A heartfelt thank you extends to the dedicated regional organizer clubs and volunteers whose unwavering commitment forms the bedrock of our accomplishments. Your hard work echoes in the success stories that define BCI, and it is with genuine appreciation that I acknowledge your invaluable contributions.

In the vibrant tapestry of 2023, BCI proudly hosted two regional conventions in the Philippines and Indonesia, alongside a main convention in China. The enthusiasm and participation exhibited during these events truly made it a bustling and fulfilling year. Our magazine is adorned with numerous articles encapsulating the spirit of these conventions, offering a delightful journey through the details of our shared experiences.

As we embark on the adventures that 2024 has in store, the BCI executive team is fervently engaged in bringing positive changes to our organization. Collaborating closely with the Board of Directors, we are initiating impactful transformations at the administrative and program levels. Committees are diligently working to enhance our instructor registry, membership initiatives, and educational programs. Exciting developments are also underway for a revamped BCI website, promising an enriched experience for all.

Mark your calendars, dear members, as the BCI Annual International Convention, titled "Bonsai on the Bayou 2024," beckons us to Houston, Texas, this spring. This collaborative effort between the Lone Star Bonsai Federation and Bonsai Clubs International, hosted by the Houston Bonsai Society, promises a memorable experience from April 25th to 28th at the Houston Marriott Westchase. I am honored to deliver a keynote speech at the opening ceremony, and we eagerly anticipate the selection of six BCI excellence awards. Among the distinguished attendees will be our 2nd Vice President, Master Min Hsuan Lo, and our Director, Master Enrique Castaño. Your presence at this splendid event would be the crowning glory, and we look forward to seeing as many of you as possible.

In the spirit of continuous growth, our executive team is actively exploring opportunities to organize



Mr. Chen, Chang
BCI President

Many BCI representatives will attend the exciting "Bonsai on the Bayou: An International Convention," April 25 to 28 at the Houston Marriott Westchase, including our 2nd Vice President, Master Min Hsuan Lo, our Director, Master Enrique Castaño. I will deliver a keynote speech at the opening ceremony, and six BCI excellence awards will be chosen.

more conventions in 2024 and 2025. Stay tuned for further details as these plans unfold.

Personally, I am filled with excitement for the transformative year ahead. With a dedicated and dynamic team by our side, 2024 is poised to be a year of positive change for BCI. Anticipating the unfolding of new chapters, I eagerly look forward to the shared journey that awaits us.

Wishing you all a year filled with warmth, growth, and the joy of bonsai. 🌳

Warm regards,
Chen, Chang
BCI President

You are invited to be a part of the BCI Vision.

We are raising funds for the future of BCI!
Any donation you can make, will help.

Remember BCI in your will, your trust, your future!

For more information contact:

Mr. Chen Chang, president@bonsai-bci.com

Message from the Editor

Last year, 2023, was a banner year for BCI with two regional conventions and a record-breaking annual international convention in Shuyang, China, where 1360 Bonsai and Penjing were exhibited. This is a testament to **President Chen's** commitment to the art of bonsai. The coming year promises to be just as spectacular for the bonsai world. On April 25 to 28, BCI and the **Lone Star Bonsai Federation** will convene in Houston, Texas, for the 2024 Annual International Convention, Bonsai on the Bayou, hosted by the **Houston Bonsai Society**. Typical for a North American convention, the focus is on teaching. The organizers offer 24 workshops, six seminars, four exhibit critiques, and two demonstrations limited to a few participants for maximum interaction with the demonstrating masters. As the fourth largest city in the USA, Houston provides the perfect backdrop to this outstanding bonsai experience. Don't waste a minute; go to www.houstonbonsaisociety.com and reserve your spot. Space is limited.

Bonsai, Penjing, and Viewing Stone appreciation have experienced many golden ages. As these captivating art forms have spread worldwide, people from all walks of life continually discover these meditative and creative expressions. From professionals to passionate enthusiasts, these art forms have a life-changing effect, as you'll see when you read the stories in this edition.

Herbert Obermayer and **Gudrun Benz** traveled to Milan, Italy, to participate in and report on the Crespi Cup, one of Europe's premier bonsai and suiseki events. The Crespi family avidly supports the Japanese aesthetic and provides an immersive experience for lovers of all things Japanese; taiko drumming, tea ceremony, calligraphy, and more.

BCI's 2nd vice president **Min Hsuan Lo** and his son, **Andrew**, report on the Taiwan Bonsai Creators Association's exhibit. This exclusive organization requires all bonsai to be created by the exhibitor. The trees are superb. By the way, Vice President Lo is one of the headliners at Bonsai on the Bayou in Houston this spring.

Some of bonsai award-winner **Tony Tickle's** best friends are women who are passionate about bonsai. Tony profiles four artists who have amazing trees and have well-earned international reputations. Watch for them at a bonsai event near you.

I watched one of **Bjorn Bjorholm's** videos about his "legacy" tree and approached Bjorn for a collaborative reboot in print. The tree could be described as "drop-dead gorgeous," and it is just at the beginning of its bonsai journey. As Bjorn moves to Japan, the tree has a new home.

BCI Director **Massimo Bandera** presents the work of one of his students, an inspiring story of how bonsai can enrich a hobbyist's life and provide meaning.

Some people, whether through training, intellect, or a combination of both, excel at whatever they do. **Pierre Leloup**, a professional designer, is such a person. He shows us how he carved a base for a stone and showcases his collection of suiseki.

We are enjoying another golden age of bonsai and related arts, this time international in scope. Let's keep innovating and excelling! 🌳

—Joe Grande, Canada

MISSION STATEMENT

BONSAI CLUBS INTERNATIONAL

Bonsai Clubs International, a not-for-profit educational organization, advances the ancient and living art of bonsai and related arts through the global sharing of knowledge. We educate while promoting international friendship and solidify world relationships through cooperation with individuals and organizations whose purpose is consistent with ours.

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Bonsai Excellence Unveiled

A Recap of the 2023 BCI Annual International Bonsai Convention in China

By Oscar Ng, China

Photos courtesy BCI China, Min Hsuan Lo, Budi Sulisty, Lindsay Bebb and Susan Lee.



Top: The formal entrance to the 2023 International Convention Main Exhibition

Inset: Convention participants gather to depart for the Opening Ceremony

In the golden month of September, fragrant *osmanthus* fills the air. On September 29, 2023, the “2023 International Bonsai Convention Annual Main Exhibition” grandly opened in Shuyang, Jiangsu Province, known as the hometown of Chinese bonsai and flowers, and concluded on October 6.

This exhibition, organized by Bonsai Clubs International (BCI) and the People's Government of Shuyang County, saw active participation from bonsai

organizations across China. It brought together over 1,360 exquisite bonsai masterpieces and international bonsai photographs from all corners of the country. These masterpieces not only embody the principles of Chinese bonsai, rooted in the “learning from nature” guideline and the poetic sentiment of Chinese culture, but also uniquely carry forward the distinct aesthetic concepts and emotional thoughts of the Chinese nation. Chinese bonsai, often described as a “three-dimensional



Top: The main exhibit hall is an architectural marvel.

Middle right: View of the exhibit hall interior.

Left column, Top to bottom: Speeches by: Jiang Ruoming, the Secretary of the Shuyang county administrative committee; BCI Past President Frank Mihalic; BCI President Chen Chang; Announcement of Bonsai Exhibits Awards by Deng Yanming, the County Chief of Shuyang county

Bottom right: BCI Past presidents I.C. Su and Frank Mihalic with BCI President Chen Chang in front of Chen Chang's Gold prize Juniper.



Top left: Chen Chang's Gold prize Juniper.
Right column: Touring activities in Shuyang City and Lianyungang City
Bottom: Visiting one of the steel mill sites of Chu Kong Petroleum and Natural Gas Steel Pipe Holding., Ltd.

painting” and a “silent poem,” captures the essence of nature and culture in its miniature form, revealing a world within inches. Here, the deep artistic skills and distinctive personalities of Chinese bonsai artists are showcased, consistently upholding the artistic philosophy of “learning from nature” and engaging in diverse explorations and innovations within the language of art.





Top left: Visiting the largest Crystal Museum in China located in Lianyungang City

Top right: Nanjing Heritage Center lantern culture exhibit

Middle left: Visiting Tianyi bonsai nursery at the foot of the famous Huaguoshan Mountain (home of the monkey king) in Lianyungang City

Lower middle: Posing with an ancient 80-year-old guqin (a traditional Chinese 7 string instrument) at the Nanjing

Middle right and bottom: A tour of the Qinhuai river, one of the most historic and romantic rivers in Nanjing



Prior to this exhibition, the historical maximum for showcased bonsai in China was around 1,100. Some believed that exhibiting 1,300 bonsai simultaneously would be a formidable task. However, under the leadership of Mr. Chen Chang, the BCI China team overcame various challenges, successfully accomplishing this seemingly impossible feat. The dazzling display of 1,360 exquisite works in the exhibition hall, sourced from various provinces, cities, autonomous regions, special districts, and international friends, attests to the rewriting of history. This exhibition marks a significant milestone in the history of world bonsai exhibitions, serving as a new



starting point and an important milestone for BCI-sponsored events.

Another highlight of the convention was the innovative judging process, with 46 bonsai masters scoring and summarizing 1,100 works in a named manner. This breakthrough in judging addressed historical challenges of unfairness, resulting in 111 gold awards, 222 silver awards, 333 bronze awards, and 433 excellent awards.

The BCI Annual Convention stands out as the most anticipated international event in the bonsai world, significantly advancing the dissemination and exchange of bonsai art globally. Seamlessly integrating aesthetics and academic content, this convention provides a rare opportunity for learning and opens up new perspectives for the future of bonsai creations. It fosters the exchange and integration of Chinese bonsai culture with international bonsai culture, showcasing the developmental context and latest achievements of Chinese bonsai art.

The hosting of the 2023 BCI Annual Convention not only showcases the unique charm of Chinese bonsai culture to the world but also reflects the substantial efforts made by BCI in promoting and disseminating bonsai globally. It demonstrates the organizational appeal and influence of BCI, emphasizing the absorption and incorporation of excellent cultural elements and techniques from other countries and regions. This, in turn, strengthens the exchange among bonsai enthusiasts worldwide, contributing to the international development of Chinese bonsai art.

The guests present at the convention included members of the BCI Board of Directors and international bonsai representatives from various countries, each bringing their unique cultural backgrounds and perspectives. Their shared interest in bonsai served as a unifying force, transcending borders and showcasing the charm of bonsai and the appeal of BCI.

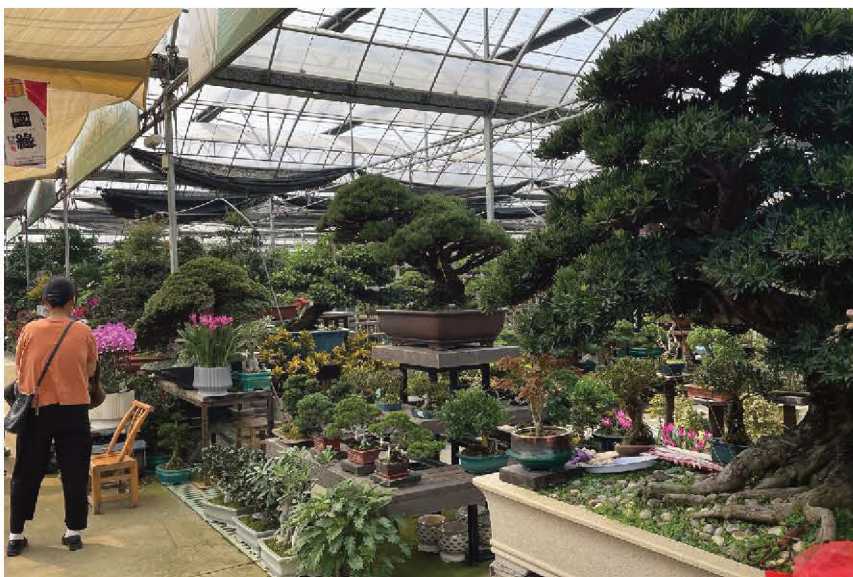
BCI China expresses sincere gratitude to the council members and international bonsai enthusiasts, recognizing their diverse backgrounds and the unique platform that BCI provides for bonsai enthusiasts worldwide. BCI China warmly welcomes future international bonsai experts and enthusiasts to guide and exchange ideas in China, contributing to the global development of bonsai art.

The successful conclusion of the 2023 International Bonsai Convention Annual Main Exhibition signifies a promising future for BCI, positioned to elevate bonsai culture on a global scale. Best wishes for a brighter future for BCI, and may the future of world bonsai art shine even more brilliantly! 🌳

Top: Tour of the peak of Huaguoshan Mountain.

Middle: 10th International Flower & Tree festival in Shuyang City

Bottom: Shuyang City Bonsai market





Top: *Ligustrum retusum* by
Chen Chang
Bottom: Unique juniper
Penjing

Decoding the Poetry of 1,360 Bonsai Exhibits

By Min Hsuan Lo & Andrew Lo,
Taiwan

Each bonsai weaves a distinct narrative, with its own origin story and evolution. The trajectory of each bonsai, from its inception to maturity, is an unpredictable tale that may unfold as a comedy or take unexpected turns.

In the vast exhibition hall, more than 1300 bonsai took center stage simultaneously. It's challenging to

fathom the immense efforts invested to bring this grand event to life. For me, immersing myself in the exhibition was akin to reading a classic novel like *Dream of the Red Chamber*. Just as one delves into each line, each word to understand the intricate relationships between characters, exploring BCI China 2023 demanded time and attention. Sadly, the sheer volume of bonsai made





Top: In the gallery, all kinds of bonsai were displayed together

Bottom: Unique exhibition room from Beijing



it impossible to view them all in a short time. I focused on my favorites, hastily capturing images to savor their stories at home. The essence was to feel the beauty and cultural richness of bonsai, along with the friendships cultivated through this art form.

The 2023 BCI Annual Main Exhibition in Shuyang (沛陽) unfolded across multiple exhibition areas, spanning the first and second floors. Galleries were adorned with bonsai of diverse varieties, styles, and sizes. Several exhibition rooms were thematic, featuring collections such as tropical bonsai from Lingnan and temperate varieties from Beijing in a single space. Unfortunately, time constraints limited a comprehensive exploration of this magnificent bonsai exhibition.

China's extensive bonsai history has given rise to various styles, each with distinctive artistic characteristics. During this tour, we encountered expansive



Top: Yamadori Jin & lifeline

Bottom: *Ulmus* sp. with a special pot



In the vast exhibition hall, more than 1300 bonsai took center stage simultaneously. It's challenging to fathom the immense efforts invested to bring this grand event to life.



junipers not seen in previous conventions in Guangzhou (廣州) (2016) and Zunyi (遵義) (2019). The exhibition hall and vendor area showcased materials sourced from mountains, some potentially centuries old. One standout specimen, a *Platycladus orientalis*, collected almost a decade ago, was later grafted with Taiwan Juniper, Jizhou Juniper, or Itoigawa Juniper. A mere decade was dedicated to styling, resulting in awe-inspiring achievements. Visits to Shuyang (沭陽) and Lianyungang (連雲港) revealed nurseries housing numerous towering junipers adorned with exquisite deadwood. The future promises these junipers as a luminous chapter in the global bonsai narrative.

Having attended numerous bonsai exhibitions worldwide, each international journey broadens horizons and fosters friendships. Through bonsai, perspectives expand, and skills grow amidst diverse countries and cultures. The 2023 BCI Annual Main Exhibition in Shuyang stands out as one of the peaks in my bonsai journey. Gratitude and congratulations extend to President Chen Chang (陳昌) and his team for orchestrating this exceptional event in China. 🌲

Top: Windswept water & land Penjing *Ligustrum retusum* by Chen Chang

Middle: Huge juniper in Tianyi bonsai nursery

Bottom left: Huge Juniper in Shuyang.

Bottom right: Four people working together in Lianyungang, Tianyi Bonsai nursery



Demonstrators at the BCI Annual International Convention

By Budi Sulisty, Jakarta, Indonesia

Contributing editor José Luis Rodríguez Macías, Puerto Rico

Among the highlights of any bonsai convention are the opportunities the public has to learn new techniques and further one's design capabilities through demonstrations. For those who have had the privilege of attending conventions abroad, witnessing the creative muse of renowned bonsai artists entices a plethora of enthusiasm and further ignites the already-present interest one has in bonsai and suiseki art. Such was the case at the BCI Annual International Convention in Shuyang, China. During the afternoon of September 29, 2023, immediately after the opening ceremony, the international bonsai demonstration program, consisting of four (4) headliners, took place. The stage was huge and wide, enabling spectators enough leisurely space to walk about and enjoy the program.

Firstly, **Mike Siow**, the Founding President of the Malaysian Penjing Art Creation Society (MPACS), a well-known Master who has traveled to countless countries to teach bonsai and suiseki art, was on the far left, tackling a huge old Black Pine (*Pinus thunbergii*). The tree was well-developed and had good caliper branches and numerous twigs but lacked the harmony associated with a dignified and mature black pine bonsai. Keenly identifying its virtues and flaws, Mike and his assistants rearranged the small branches and twigs to create a cohesive picture and a harmonized design. Although the tree was enormous in size, Mike had enough time to finish the demonstration that lasted from 2:00–5:00 pm. As a result, an outstanding slanting bonsai with a prominent *sashieda* (long extended branch) was brought to life; reminiscent of the iconic Yingkesong, also known as Guest-Welcoming Pine or Guest-Greeting Pine—located on Huangshan Mountain in Anhui province, China.

Second in line, **Enrique Castaño de la Serna**, from Mexico and current President of the Latinamerican Bonsai Federation (FELAB) of the World Bonsai Friendship Federation, also worked on Black Pine material, almost the same height as the tree worked on by Master Mike Siow. Among its features was a very thick branch in the lower portion of the trunk that had its tip previously cut. During the demo, Castaño further cut the thick branch, forcing the flow of the



Mike Siow, the Founder President of the Malaysian Penjing Art Creation Society (MPACS), tackled a huge old Black Pine (*Pinus thunbergii*)





tree to become an informal upright/Moyogi style. As the structure of the upper side was fully developed, two Chinese assistants wired every single branch and twig, bending them into the desired shape. The overall timeframe to complete the work was about three hours.

Next in line was **Grandmaster Chen Chang**, a man with too many accolades to enumerate! Among his accomplishments are: current BCI President, China Penjing Maestro, The General Director of Flower Bonsai & Suiseki Branch of the Chinese Society of Landscape Architecture, The Director of the China Region of WBFF, and an important person in the steel industry in China. To the enthusiasm of the spectators, Grandmaster Chen and his assistants diligently worked on a *Malus*—Apple tree. The number of fruits present on the material was astonishing. As the tree had a complicated structure, with the aid of a saw, Grandmaster Chen removed a thick and unsightly branch. Further reduction of other branches was continued until the tree's structure became simpler and more harmonious.



Enrique Castaño de la Serna, from Mexico and current President of the Latinamerican Bonsai Federation (FELAB) of the World Bonsai Friendship Federation, also worked on Black Pine

Grandmaster Chen Chang and his assistants diligently worked on a *Malus*—Apple tree.



To create a pleasing image, all the leaves were removed, and the fragrant fruits were kept. Immediately after, with great care and under the tutelage of Grandmaster Chen, the assistants wired the remaining branches and twigs. After around two hours, Grandmaster Chen turned the tree around, revealing its true front, much to the shock of the spectators! The result was a pleasing thick, two-trunk tree with a fabulous *tachiagari*. The main trunk ascended in a tapering fashion, with an elegant flow. The second one grew to the left and further split into two branches; one grew long and to the left with an interesting flow, while the other grew up as a smaller trunk, complete with branches and apex. A crowd favorite, Grandmaster Chen's tree resulted in a beautiful composition, further complemented by numerous fruits that were purposely left to please the eyes of the spectators. It was a truly great demonstration.

Lastly, we had the pleasure of witnessing **Mr. Wang Hengliang**, a Chinese Penjing Maestro and a first-class national-level artist. Among his accomplishments are:



After around two hours, Grandmaster Chen turned the tree around, revealing its true front, much to the shock of the spectators!



Vice General Director of Flower Bonsai & Suiseki Branch of the Chinese Society of Landscape Architecture, The Vice Director of the China Region of BCI, and the founder and Chief of the Wang Hengliang Public Welfare and Lecturer Hall. Some of his bonsai have garnered gold awards in the National China Penjing Exhibition. As his choice material, he worked on a tall, thin cypress material, which to the untrained spectator, seemed to be a simple garden plant. Some people wondered about what he was going to do with such a tree. He quickly cut some unnecessary branches, simplifying its shape. He then allowed his assistants to continue the work while he embarked on working on a second semi-finished bonsai and finalized it. He worked on two more bonsai, allowing his assistants to do the raw work on the main demo cypress. Finally, he went back to the main bonsai material and put the final touches, bringing his design vision to fruition. The result was a nice bunjingi bonsai. During his demonstration, Master Wang distributed his album, a nice luxury hardcover book titled: *Wang Hengliang Design of Bonsai and Chinese Painting Art*.



Bonsai Clubs International offers unique opportunities to the spectators, allowing magic to happen. The annual and regional BCI conventions represent a knowledge base that can only be experienced by being present. As bonsai enthusiasts and lifetime practitioners, we are always amazed by the unexpected. Although, as authors, we try our best to report on the happenings and highlights that transpire during our events, I hope that the pictures and explanations bring forth future opportunities for our members to attend and meet the masters in person. By doing so, we truly honor BCI and its mission to spread bonsai and suiseki art on the international level. We hope to meet you in person!! 🌲

Mr. Wang Hengliang, a Chinese Penjing Maestro and a first-class national-level artist, worked on a tall, thin cypress material, which to the untrained spectator, seemed to be a simple garden plant.



A Sampling of the Exhibits at the 2023 BCI Annual International Convention

Masters Exhibition



Top left: "Looking Back and Smiling in the Garden of Spring," *Bougainvillea sp.*, Guangdong, by Chen Chang.

Top right: "Phoenix Dance and Dragon Flying," Qipan, Heisong, Jiangsu, by Xue Yiping.

Middle left: "Sleeping Qin in the Green Shade," *Podocarpus sp.*, Chongqing, by Pei Jiaqing.

Middle right: Canghai Heisong Jiangsu Li Wenming.

Bottom left: "Flying Together," Huangshan Pine, Hunan, by Zhang Deming.

Bottom right: Hackberry (*Celtis sinensis*) Taiwan, China Jiasheng Garden.



Gold Awards

Top left: Wall-Walling Pine, Five-needle Pine, Zhejiang, by Sun Xianzhen.

Top right: "Glorious Years," Hinoki Cypress, Bonsai Paradise, by Wang Juan.

Middle left: "Four Generations Under One Roof," Five-needle Pine, Zhejiang, by Guan Yinhai.

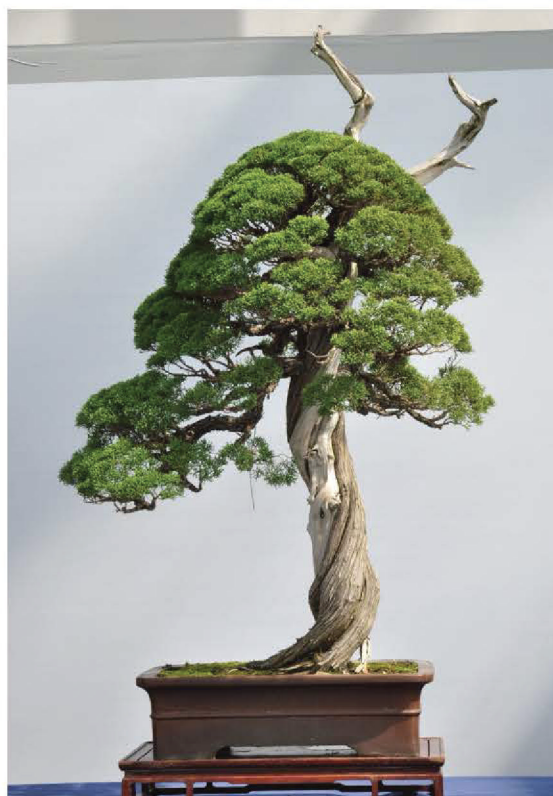
Middle right: "Flowers Dance in the Wind," *Bougainvillea* sp., Guangdong, by Lin Xuezhao.

Bottom left: "Magpie Bridge and Quemei," Fujian, by Qiu Wenlin.

Bottom right: "Dongqing in his prime," Guangxi, by Li Liheng.



Silver Awards



Top left: "Cuizhan Green Needle Breathing Chisong," produced by Jiangsu Huaian Flower and Tree Bonsai Association.

Top right: "Sea of Clouds on the Cliff," Hinoki Cypress, Anhui, by Wang Luye.

Middle left: Lingyun Zhenbai, Shuyang, Jiangsu, by Li Zhixiang.

Middle right: "Taoism is created from heaven," Zhenbai, Anhui, by Yang Jide.

Bottom left: "The oblique shadow of ancient trees reflects in the river," Boxwood, Hunan, by Xia Botao.

Bottom right: Feitian, Hinoki Cypress, Bonsai Paradise by Huaxinsi Wang Jianzuo.

Bronze Awards

Top left: "Autumn Rhythm," Triangle Maple, Anhui, by Chen Dewei.

Top right: "Standing in the Universe," by Huang Jing, Yunnan, by Wang Zemin.

Middle left: "Photography on the Waves," Acacia, Hubei, by Chen Zhiyong.

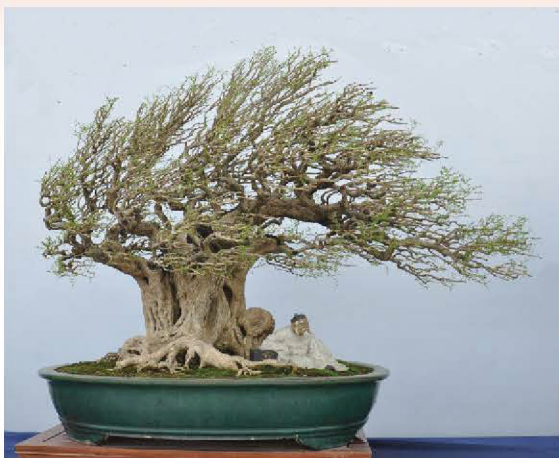
Middle right: "Maple Rhymes," Triangle Maple, Hubei, by Chen Xiaodong.

Bottom left: "Wild Green," Hackberry Tree, Guangdong, by Wang Chaohui.

Bottom right: "Nostalgia Quemei," Guangxi, by Wang Andu.



Windblown



Water & Land Penjing



Fruit Bearing



Top left: Gold Award: "Strong Wind Blows," by Jiuli Xiang, Guangdong, by Zhong Zhiyong.

Top right: Master Exhibition Works: "Feng Yun Wu," by Bolan Hainan and Wang Liyong.

Middle left: Silver Award: "Interesting Picture," Five-needle Pine, Jiangsu Province, by Hu Xusheng and Yang Wenlei.

Middle right: Gold Award: "United as one," Osaka Pine Bonsai Paradise, Huaxinsi Kang Chuanjian.

Bottom left: Silver Award: "Pomegranate with Pearls," Shandong Li Xinzuo.

Bottom right: Bronze Award: "Dragon Exploring the Sea, Golden Marbles," Chongqing, by Ran Congyan.

And Many More... Scan this QR code or visit the BCI website www.bonsai-bci.com to see the report and gallery on the 2023 BCI Annual International Convention in Shuyang, China.



Bonsai on the Bayou April 25-28, 2024

An International Bonsai Convention is Coming to Houston

By Ken Cousino, HBS Public Relations Director , USA



Top: Bayou Place, Houston Skyline, Downtown. Photo © Katie Haugland Bowen

After conducting a highly successful national convention in 2019, the Houston Bonsai Society (HBS) wanted to produce a genuinely international bonsai event that would garner participation from around the world. HBS knew that large scale international bonsai gatherings have only occurred a few times in the US, and Houston was determined to cater a significant global event in 2024. To do it, we partnered with Bonsai Clubs International (BCI). As a result, volunteers began working on the upcoming “Bonsai on the Bayou 2024: An International Convention” held in Houston from April 25-28, 2024.

Building on the success of the 2019 national convention

So, how did the 2019 national convention come together? How will HBS pull off this more significant North American bonsai celebration with international reach in 2024? And what tips can you glean from the HBS work to help plan your bonsai event or convention?

HBS Chair Peter Parker shares 12 tips to guide aspiring event organizers based on our successful experience. These include developing a solid team of volunteers, crafting a diverse program, creating a

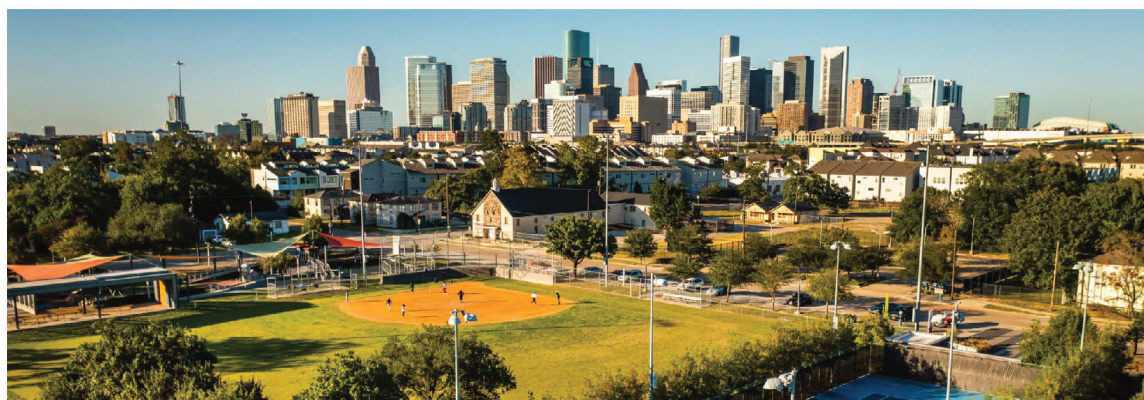


promoting
international friendship
through bonsai

bci

Bonsai Clubs International

BONSAI ON THE BAYOU 2024



Bonsai on the Bayou 2024 Headliners

Top left: BCI's 2nd Vice President Min Hsuan Lo, Taiwan. Photo © Gudrun Benz.

Top right: Bjorn Bjorholm, USA/ Japan. Photo © Bjorn Bjorholm.

Middle left: Sergio Cuan, USA. Photo courtesy Sergio Cuan.

Middle right: Sean Smith, USA. Photo © Candy Shirey

Bottom: Emancipation Park and Houston Skyline. Photo, © Houston First Corporation

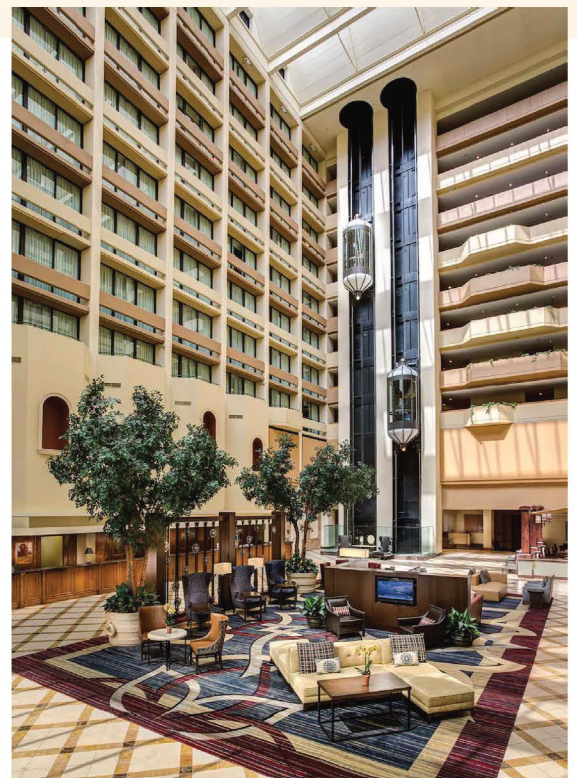


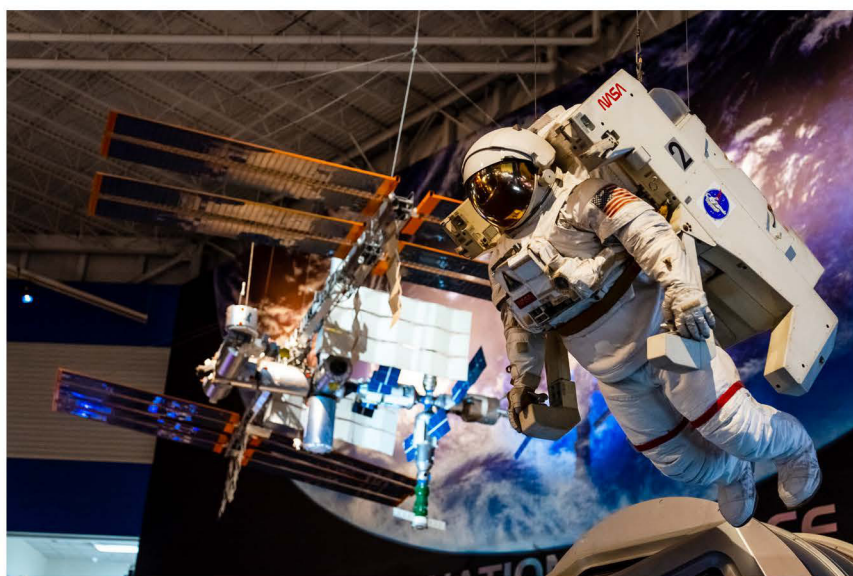
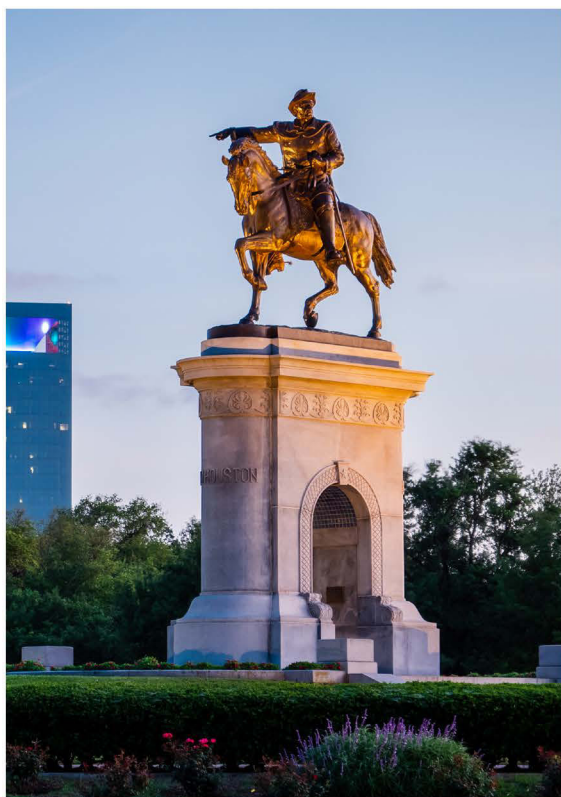
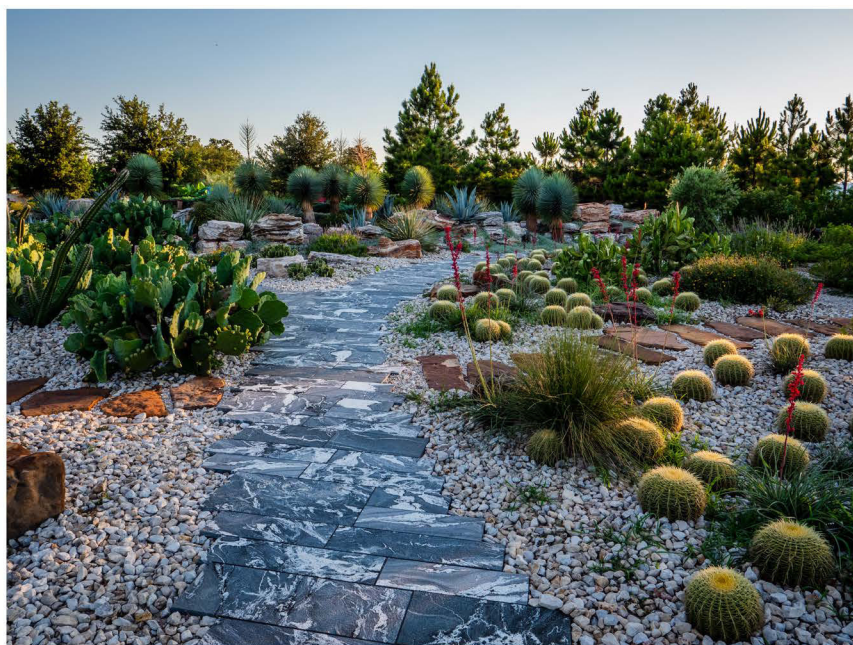
Other special guests will lead workshops and include BCI's Director Enrique Castaño of Mexico, Pedro Morales of Puerto Rico, and US-based artists Mike Lane, Evan Pardue, David Kreutz, Randy Bennett, BCI Past President Frank Mihalic and Sooncheng Cheah.

Upper middle left and right: Nestled in the heart of Houston, the Marriott Westchase hotel offers a sophisticated blend of comfort and convenience. With modern conference amenities, stylish accommodations, and a central location, it's an ideal retreat for business and leisure travelers seeking a luxurious stay in the vibrant Westchase district. Conference attendees qualify for a discount. Photos courtesy Marriott Hotels.



Lower middle left and bottom left and right: Downtown Houston pulses with a dynamic blend of dining and entertainment options, offering a culinary mosaic from gourmet eateries to trendy cafes. As the sun sets, the city comes alive with theaters, live music venues, and vibrant nightlife, creating an unforgettable urban experience for every palate and preference. Photos © Houston First Corporation.





meaningful logo, utilizing technology for communication and registration, pursuing sponsors, selecting a suitable venue, curating quality bonsai material, and promoting the event through various media channels.

The Houston Bonsai Society is a participating member of the region's Lone Star Bonsai Federation (LSBF), which includes 11 bonsai clubs from Texas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma. Each year, one club is tasked with conducting a long weekend of bonsai fun and learning, a convention that attracts members, vendors, and exhibitors from throughout the region.

HBS, LSBF, and BCI, have two objectives in common

Bonsai organizations, such as HBS, LSBF, and BCI, have two objectives in common when organizing conventions such as "Bonsai on the Bayou".

The first is to increase awareness of bonsai in the served region. Promoting the event invites the public to see the exhibition, exposing new segments of the

population to bonsai and compelling new people to try their hand at the bonsai art form.

A second convention objective strives to increase the skills of those who participate and exhibit their works. Workshops and seminars are educational, led by extraordinarily talented artists, and increase the knowledge and techniques of the bonsai participants. The exhibition provides an opportunity to apply what was learned previously through a display of bonsai, kusamono, and suiseki. Showing an artist's work to others offers the chance for a critique of the work among peers and judges. Workshops, seminars, and exhibitions combined sharpen the artist's approach for future bonsai exhibitions.

Bringing Bonsai into the limelight

In 2019, Houston won the job of executing the LSBF convention but established a broader goal of exposing bonsai to people from around the country. So, they teamed up with the American Bonsai Society (ABS),

Photos © Houston First Corporation.

Top left and right: The Houston Botanic Garden is a vibrant oasis nestled within the heart of Houston, Texas, offering visitors a captivating journey through diverse landscapes and ecosystems. Its xeriscape educates visitors about the unique flora of desert regions.

Middle left: Towering at 67 feet in Hermann Park, this bronze statue depicts Sam Houston, the hero of Texas independence and the state's first president, on horseback.

Middle right: Embark on a cosmic journey at the NASA Display, see the wonders of space and witness the awe-inspiring achievements of human space exploration.



Photos by Ken Cousino.

Top left: Houston Bonsai Society volunteers photographing the bonsai on exhibit.

Top right: Attendees at “Bonsai on the Bayou 2019” received a “swag bag” that included fun stuff, educational materials, information, and the themed collectors’ pin.

Middle right: Volunteers gathered to prepare convention materials.

Bottom left: “Bonsai on the Bayou 2019” included a living, three-dimensional lobby display to welcome everyone and a welcome letter and proclamation from Houston’s mayor. Attendees each received a “swag bag” that

and together, the groups hosted the first “Bonsai on the Bayou”, a hugely successful convention that was national in scope and reach, attracting more than 200 participants, with attendance that exceeded 1000 members of the public who came to experience the beautiful exhibition.

Some would say that the 2019 convention was international in scope as it featured headliners Enrique Castaño of Mexico, Californian Boon Manakitivipart, Ryan Neil of Oregon, with special guests British carver Will Baddeley, Danny Coffey of North Carolina, Jonas Dupuich of California, and Byron Myrick of Mississippi!

“Bonsai on the Bayou 2019” included a living, three-dimensional lobby display to welcome everyone and a welcome letter and proclamation from Houston’s mayor. Attendees each received a “swag bag” that



included fun stuff, educational materials, information, and the themed collectors’ pin. The convention ran from Thursday afternoon to 2 p.m. on Sunday and included 14 workshops, 12 seminars, 2 private demonstrations, and 3 exhibit critiques. Five to seven events occurred simultaneously at any given time during the event! The vendor area was spacious, with 60 tables full of bonsai wares for sale.

A huge raffle was held twice daily, and many tickets were sold for the appealing bonsai-related items. The 4700 square feet exhibition area featured more than 100 formally displayed Bonsai and artistic Kusamono arrangements and Suiseki. The event also included a Friday night dinner with demonstrations by the headliners and a Saturday evening awards banquet. The result? Because of the detailed organizational skills of our HBS volunteers, the convention became the largest exhibit in the USA and the region’s most extensive lineup of workshops and seminars ever. The event introduced bonsai to thousands throughout the region and the nation and generated revenue to support future bonsai programs of HBS, LSBF, and ABS.

So, how is HBS approaching the 2024 “Bonsai on the Bayou” Convention?

To create a truly international, educational, and entertaining bonsai event in mind, planning for the 2024 international convention began in winter 2022. HBS Chair Peter Parker approached BCI with a proposal requesting its help in producing a truly international event. And BCI agreed!

With the help of BCI, the original Houston convention is turning itself into something genuinely international. BCI’s President Chen Chang will travel from China to attend the opening ceremony and present six BCI awards at the convention. Feature headline artists this time, all internationally known, were secured, including BCI’s 2nd Vice President Min Hsuan Lo of Taiwan, Bjorn BJORHOLM of Tennessee, who will make one of his last appearances in the US before moving permanently to Japan, New Yorker Sergio Cuan, and Pennsylvanian Sean Smith. Other special guests were garnered, including BCI’s Director Enrique Castaño of Mexico, Pedro Morales of Puerto Rico, and US-based artists Mike Lane, Evan Pardue, David Kreutz, Randy Bennett, and Frank Mihalic. Sooncheng Cheah, an HBS member and one of the best kusamono artists in the US, was also recruited to lead a workshop.

The venue selected includes exhibit and vendor halls, adequate room spaces for seminars and workshops, and discounted room rates for convention attendees. Then, a committee of volunteers gathered to collect and maintain workshop materials. A schedule of events was immediately planned, including seminars, workshops (and their cost), raffles, demonstrations, dinner, and a banquet. The group also developed online registration, written materials, and an informative website.

As a result, the 2024 event will feature a whopping 24 workshops, six seminars, four exhibit critiques, and two private demonstrations! A private demonstration is lead by one of our headline artists. Attendance is limited to only 25 participants, and is extremely intimate. The artist demonstrates, describing the thought process about the design, with back and forth questions and answers by participants. It’s a great way to learn! More than 20 vendors will show off their wares.

Yes, together with BCI, HBS is organized and excited for bonsai enthusiasts from around the world to come enjoy a great celebration of bonsai in the beautiful city of Houston!

Here at HBS, the ultimate goal of all bonsai events should be to increase awareness and understanding of bonsai. Producing events such as days of learning or weekend-long conventions increases awareness and educates local bonsai enthusiasts and the general public about bonsai. Exhibitions provide the opportunity to apply knowledge in a beautiful display of prized bonsai, kusamono, and suiseki. Finally, a satisfying outcome is getting new people involved in the art of bonsai.

The exciting “Bonsai on the Bayou: An International Convention” is coming to Houston from April 25- 28, 2024, at the Marriott Houston Westchase Hotel. Here’s your chance to attend a great convention in a beautiful venue with outstanding artists, excellent workshop and seminar selections, and outstanding vendor wares. For more information or to register your attendance, check out the Facebook page “Bonsai on the Bayou” or visit www.houstonbonsaisociety.com/bonsaionthebayou

We will see each of you in Houston this April, a beautiful time of year to visit the fourth-largest city in the US!

This 2024 event will feature a whopping 24 workshops, six seminars, four exhibit critiques, and two private demonstrations.

Bottom: Houston’s, Downtown Aquarium. Photo © Katie Haugland Bowen



For more information or to register your attendance, check out the Facebook page “Bonsai on the Bayou” or use this QR Code:





Women in Bonsai

Challenging Assumptions and Celebrating Trailblazers

By Tony Tickle, United Kingdom

While this article couldn't showcase an extensive representation, it acknowledges the countless other talented women contributing their passion and expertise to the world of bonsai.

In the world of bonsai, a seemingly enigmatic gender disparity has long been a topic of discussion. Why are there so few women in bonsai? While there may not be a definitive answer, exploring this issue from a female practitioner's perspective is essential. As we delve into this complex matter, we must recognize and celebrate the contributions of trailblazers like Kathy Shaner and the late Pauline Muth and Mary Madison from the United States. Their pioneering efforts have paved the way for many rising stars in bonsai, including Caroline (Caz) Scott from the UK, Jennifer Price from the USA, and Elsa Boudouri from Greece/Italy and Marija Hajdić from Croatia, all of whom I know personally.

The gender gap in the world of bonsai has become a point of contention in recent years, with social media discussions seeking to address this perceived imbalance. The content of this article primarily stems from a female practitioner who is both frustrated with the current situation and irritated by the condescending attitudes expressed in that discussion.

I aim to contribute to this discourse by offering insights gleaned from in-person and online conversations. Interestingly, my perspective on this issue shifted after attending prominent bonsai events in India, where the majority of practitioners were women. This unexpected gender balance made me wonder if the underrepresentation of women in bonsai is culturally influenced or the result of other factors.

High-level Bonsai

Defining “high-level bonsai” is crucial to understanding the issue at hand. Does it mean becoming a professional bonsai artist? If so, we must consider whether this is a career path readily pursued by both men and women. It's worth noting that there aren't a substantial number of men making a full-time career out of bonsai, so why assume gender-based disproportional representation?

Alternatively, can “high-level bonsai” be defined as producing award-winning or show-quality trees? The issue might be that many women create top-tier trees without seeking recognition through show wins. In this case, the challenge is to encourage these talented women to showcase their trees in exhibitions. While this recognition can be a stepping stone to success, it hinges on a desire to participate in shows. Just as with men, many women create high-quality bonsai that may

never grace a show bench because they don't feel the need to prove themselves in this manner.


One core issue that deeply frustrated a friend of mine is the underlying assumption that women are non-existent in high-quality bonsai creation. She firmly believes that there are women creating high-quality bonsai. Therefore, though well-intentioned, the online discussion about establishing mentorship programs can come across as patronizing. Mentorship programs can be valuable if the mentors are women, but they risk being the bonsai equivalent of mansplaining if not thoughtfully approached.

Confronting Entrenched Opinions

As my friend sees it, the challenge in the UK is not about “getting more women into bonsai.” There has been a noticeable increase in the visibility of women in the bonsai community across various tiers, from casual club participants to advanced practitioners and even professionals. The challenge, she believes, lies in confronting certain entrenched opinions held by a small but vocal minority, primarily male bonsai practitioners and administrators.

This minority perpetuates the outdated belief that women should remain confined to the role of making tea and baking scones in clubs. Disheartening comments like “Don't feature a female headliner, or no one will attend” and attitudes such as “What can I learn from a woman in this workshop?” hinder progress. Addressing this underlying attitude is where the real challenge lies. Without changing this mindset, any well-intentioned suggestions are unlikely to make a significant impact. Transforming this perspective will lead to positive changes that benefit not only women but the bonsai community as a whole.

Friends Who Are Dear To Me

It is heartening to see that more women are actively engaged in the wonderful world of bonsai. The photos shared here feature friends who are dear to me and actively involved in this art form. While this article couldn't showcase an extensive representation, it acknowledges the countless other talented women contributing their passion and expertise to the world of bonsai. As we continue to challenge assumptions and break barriers, the bonsai community will grow and flourish with the diverse contributions of both men and women. 

Facing page:

Top row, left to right: Caroline Scott (Caz) from the UK, Jennifer Price from the USA

Bottom row, left to right: Elsa Boudouri from Greece/Italy and Marija Hajdić from Croatia

Caroline (Caz) Scott, UK

Caroline Scott, known as “Caz,” found her true artistic passion in bonsai at 21. Willowbog Bonsai in the North East of England became her artistic haven, where she worked with renowned artists like Marco Invernizzi, Marc Noelanders, Ryan Neil, Kevin Willson, Salvatore Liporace, Peter Warren to name but a few.

Caroline’s dedication led her to roles like the secretary of the North East Bonsai Society and the founder of the British Shohin Bonsai Association. She exhibited at prestigious European shows, winning the BCI Presidents Award for Shohin composition.

As a Professional Bonsai Artist, Caz continues to share her expertise, winning awards like “Best Coniferous Tree” at The Bonsai Show Live in Telford in 2022. At 54, she remains committed to evolving and teaching the intricate art of bonsai in Ireland, across the UK, and California, USA. Caroline Scott stands as a testament to the transformative power of discovering one’s true artistic passion.





Photos courtesy Caz Scott

Top left: *Juniperus chinensis* 'Itoigawa' on display at Bonsai Live 2022

Top right: Demonstration with Peter Warren at Bonsai Live 2022.

Middle right: Working a *Pinus sylvestris*

Bottom left: Rock planting of *Juniperus chinensis* on display at Expo22. Originally put together 18 years ago.

Facing page,

Top: *Pinus sylvestris* (Scots pine)

Bottom: *Juniperus procumbens*: Best conifer award at Expo23.

Jennifer Price, USA

Jennifer Price, a bonsai artist hailing from Chicago, seamlessly integrates her background as a former ballet dancer into the intricate world of bonsai. From stumbling upon a local bonsai club to teaching at prestigious events, Jennifer's journey has been nothing short of remarkable.

Under the mentorship of bonsai veterans like Jim Doyle and Walter Pall, Jennifer's skills flourished. Now, a dedicated apprentice to Walter Pall and a student of Ryan Neil, she navigates the delicate balance between naturalistic styling and technical precision.

As one of the few women in the bonsai realm, Jennifer embraces her unique position, breaking barriers and inspiring others. Her vision includes extensive travel, workshops, and a commitment to lifelong learning. For hobbyists, she advocates workshops and local club participation, while for aspiring professionals, she stresses the importance of focused study under a single mentor.

Jennifer Price stands as a graceful innovator, choreographing the dance of trees and inviting a new generation to discover the enchanting world of bonsai.



Photos © Walter Pall, Germany.

Jennifer Price working on
a multi-trunk pine and a
Chokkan spruce.



Elsa Boudouri, Greece/Italy

Elsa Boudouri, a passionate advocate for the Art of Bonsai, calls Greece home, where her love and inspiration spring from nature, trees, and plants. Her journey with bonsai began at 14, a connection briefly interrupted by studies in Medical Laboratories, Teaching Methodology, and English Language Teaching.

From 2003 to 2013, Elsa immersed herself in gardening. During this period, she became a self-taught bonsai expert, delving into tree physiology, pathology, and bonsai techniques adapted to Greece's climate. Her dedication bore fruit, with her nurturing around 200 bonsai.

Elsa actively shares her knowledge through her blog, a YouTube channel, and as a founding member of the Greek Bonsai Forum, she further contributes to the bonsai community.

Her impact is marked by exhibitions, workshops, demos, and private lessons in Greece, Italy, China, Mexico, and the USA.

Since 2016, Elsa has resided in Bologna, Italy, working and studying with her mentor, Enrico Savini, at the Progetto Futuro European Bonsai School. Her enduring passion for bonsai, kindled at 14, remains undiminished as she continues to share her work and expertise with bonsai enthusiasts worldwide.





Facing page, top: *Buxus sempervirens*, "Doppio Tronco"

Facing page, bottom: *Juniperus sabina*, "Rastrera," (Bonsai Focus Demo)

Top left: *Morus nigra*, "Axis Mundi"

Top right: *Cupressus sempervirens*, "il Cigno"

Bottom left: *Crataegus monogyna*, "Frini"

Bottom right: *Olea europaea sylvestris*, "Lyra"

Marija Hajdić, Croatia

Marija Hajdić, born in 1976 in Dubrovnik, Croatia, is a legal professional with a Master of Laws degree. Marija is also an accomplished bonsai artist. She owns a remarkable collection of around 100 deciduous and coniferous trees, most of which she personally collected as yamadori. She manages the Meleda Bonsai Studio in Dicmo, Croatia, since 2018.

Marija has showcased her bonsai expertise internationally, exhibiting regularly at events like Trophy in Belgium and BonsaiAutumn in Switzerland. She has held solo exhibitions in Germany and Croatia and contributed articles to prestigious bonsai publications. Marija conducts workshops and demonstrations globally, sharing her passion and knowledge.

Her dedication to bonsai has earned her acclaim, including nominations at exhibitions such as Bonsai Autumn in Switzerland and Noelanders Trophy in Belgium. Marija's artistic philosophy centers on bonsai as a live sculpture, drawing inspiration from nature and considering the art form as a constant quest for innovation and self-improvement. In her words, "Doing bonsai is my inner never-ending quest for something new, for pushing boundaries of my perception."





Photos © Marija Hajdić, Croatia.

Facing page, top: *Carpinus orientalis*

Facing page, bottom: *Olea sylvestris*

Top: *Carpinus orientalis*

Bottom left: *Phillyrea latifolia*

Bottom right: *Carpinus orientalis*, "Emperor"

European Top-Class in Milan

Crespi Cup 2023: 14th International Bonsai & Suiseki Meeting



Top: Overview of the exhibition.

Middle left: Luigi Crespi does the honors of the house and accompanies Kunio Kobayashi and the consul Toshiaki Kobayashi to visit the exhibition.

Middle right: Minoru Akiyama during his workshop on tree shaping.

Bottom: Keido ceremony: the traditional Japanese display with the Third Master of Keido, master Kobayashi.



By Herbert Obermayer, Germany

Crespi stands as a beacon among Europe's premier bonsai destinations. Established by Luigi Crespi in 1979, this Parabiago-based company near Milan has solidified its position in the Italian and European bonsai community. The 14th edition of the International Bonsai & Suiseki Meeting - Crespi Cup 2023, held in September, underscored Crespi's enduring influence.

Remarkably, the event hosted not one but five distinct competitions at its southwest Milan headquarters. These included the Crespi Cup for bonsai (an invitational



Top: The *Taxus baccata* of Riccardo Vinciguerra, first classified in the exhibition-competition "Crespi Bonsai Cup".

Middle left: The *Juniperus chinensis* 'Itoigawa' of Fabio Mantovani, second classified.

Middle right: The *Cupressus sempervirens* of Valentino Villecco, third classified.

Bottom: The *Juniperus chinensis* 'Itoigawa' of Andrea Scarenzi, first classified in the exhibition-competition Crespi Shohin Cup.



tournament for professionals and collectors), the Shohin Cup, the Suiseki Cup, and an "open" exhibition for amateurs. The allure of these competitions, boasting 240 participants across various categories, was further heightened by substantial cash prizes, reaching a staggering 5000 Euros.

The event, unaffected by the mandatory four-year hiatus due to the pandemic, flourished. Over three days, a remarkable 6000 visitors attended, with exhibitors hailing predominantly from Italy but also from France, Germany, Portugal, Switzerland, Poland, and even Japan.

The inaugural proceedings featured speeches by organizer Susanna Crespi, Japanese Consul General in Milan Toshiaki Kobayashi, and bonsai masters Kunio Kobayashi, Minoru Akiyama, and Nobuyuki Kajiwarra. The opening ceremony was artfully framed by classical and modern dances, accompanied by the rhythmic beats of the taiko drum.





Top: The Zisha clay of Quing Dynasty XVII Century of Massimo Bandera, first classified in the category "ancient pots."

Middle: The pot in ceramic of Sami Amdouni from France, first classified in the category "modern."

Bottom: The *Ulmus minor* of Federico Springolo, winner of the Bonsai Association Belgium Award.

The professional and collector exhibition within the Crespi Cup showcased a pronounced emphasis on conifers, with deciduous trees serving as the exception. The exhibits achieved an international standard, reaffirming Crespi's status among Europe's premier exhibitions. The juror's task of selecting a winner from the exceptional displays was daunting. Ultimately, the accolade was bestowed upon Riccardo Vinciguerra's *Taxus baccata*, a tree displaying graceful yet restrained movement—a classic moyogi of medium size. Noteworthy contenders included Fabio Mantovani's magnificent *Juniperus chinensis* 'Itoigawa' and Valentino Villecco's cypress, securing third place.

The Shohin category witnessed the standout performance of Andrea Scarenzi's Itoigawa juniper, earning recognition as the category's best tree.

The Crespi Pot Cup saw three distinguished first-prize winners: Massimo Bandera claimed victory in the historical bowl category with a rectangular bowl from the Quing Dynasty (17th century), Igor Carino triumphed in the "handmade" class with a 3-D-printed bowl, and Frenchman Sami Amdouni secured the "modern" bowls category.

Amidst the bonsai enthusiasts' competition at the Crespi Cup, Giovanni Fabris claimed the top spot with a *Pinus sylvestris*, followed by Roberto Licini (*Larix decidua*) and Amedeo Iacona (*Juniperus chinensis*).

These awards, along with numerous special prizes, were presented during a gala evening, where Bonsai Clubs International, represented by BCI Director Massimo Bandera, also bestowed honors.

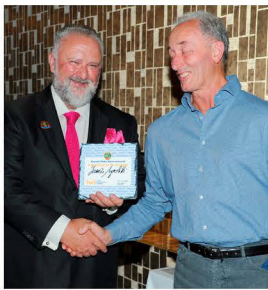
Gudrun Benz added a poignant moment to the gala by presenting a renowned Kamogawa-ishi stone, destined for the Crespi Bonsai Museum in commemoration of the enduring connection between the Crespi family and Willi (†) and Gudrun Benz. Benz expressed her belief that the Crespi family would aptly appreciate her life's "treasures."

The International Bonsai & Suiseki Meeting's enduring popularity since its inception in 1995 extends beyond the quality exhibitions. The comprehensive supporting program introduces aspects of Japanese and Far Eastern culture to visitors of all ages.

The Japanese guests played a pivotal role in bonsai education, with Kobayashi's captivating demonstration transforming a several-hundred-year-old juniper into an elegant bunjin. The "Keido Ceremony," eagerly anticipated during the opening, featured Kunio Kobayashi setting up three specially created tokonoma in the traditional manner.

Nobuyuki Kajiware, the curator of the Crespi Bonsai Museum and teacher at the Crespi Bonsai University, not only curated the exhibitions but also delivered insightful lectures on root pruning and his developed "three-bud pruning" technique. Additional lectures by Massimo Bandera, Igor Carino, and Edoardo Rossi explored aesthetic and technical nuances. 🌲

Bonsai Clubs International, represented by BCI Director Massimo Bandera, bestowed the BCI Excellence Awards



Top left, first row: Lorenzo Agnoletti and Enrico Guidi collect the BCI Prize.

Top left, second row: Luigi Maggioni collects the BCI Prize. Paco Donato collects the BCI Prize for Giorgio Rosati.

Top right: The *Juniperus sabina* of Lorenzo Agnoletti was awarded the BCI Prize.

Middle left: The modern pot in grès of Enrico Guidi was awarded the BCI Prize.

Middle right: The shohin composition of Luigi Maggioni was awarded the BCI Prize.

Bottom: The Suiseki Kinzan-seki of Giorgio Rosati was awarded the BCI Prize.

Suiseki Exhibition: Crespi Cup 2023

By Gudrun Benz, Germany



Special attention is given to suiseki at the Crespi Cup. On the opening evening (September 13th), Mr. Kobayashi explained the principles of Keido using three tokonoma exhibitions, each with a bonsai, a kusamono, and a suiseki.

The topic of a lecture by Mr. Kobayashi on Sunday was “The 10 Most Famous Suiseki in the World.” These suiseki are some stones that have already been on display in recent years at the Nippon Suiseki Association (NSA) exhibition at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum and/or at the World Bonsai Convention in Saitama 2017, Japan. Unfortunately, the lecture was only translated from Japanese into Italian, but not into English. The same was the case with Igor Carino’s lecture on the computer-controlled production of bonsai pots.

This time the Suiseki exhibition was given more space in the “pavilion”, namely more than two rows. It was also possible for exhibitors to create a presentation with accessories, such as shitakusa (accent plants) or scroll paintings, and not just present the suiseki on an exhibition table, as it was in the past. For each exhibition, a pre-selection or restriction is made by the organizer so that a high level is guaranteed. The labels only stated the type/category of suiseki in Japanese and English, but not the exhibitor. The origin of most suiseki was Japan or Italy.

Top: A Toyama-ishi stone, Martin Fercher, first classified in the Crespi Suiseki Cup.

The guest of honor, Kunio Kobayashi San, was also the juror of the Suiseki, meaning he selected the winner of the Crespi Suiseki Cup—an impressive mountain stone of Martin Fercher. This suiseki had already been selected as the best stone during the Trophy in February 2023. Martin Fercher comes from Switzerland, but the other prize winners came from Italy, as did the vast majority of the exhibitors. In addition to the Crespi Cup winner, there were 2nd and 3rd places, as well as four “menzione di merito” (honorable mentions).

In addition to six landscape stones, the winners also included two human-shaped suiseki and a stone that was difficult to assess according to its classification—it looked like a mountain peak whose strongly structured surface was reminiscent of an abstract stone. A BCI Award for Suiseki, given by Massimo Bandera, went to a beautiful mountain stone placed in front of a gold-colored screen. (See previous page) 🏔️



Facing page, middle: Sujigawa-ishi, out of competition, displayed in tribute of Willi Benz.

Facing page, bottom: Gudrun Benz donates this Kamogawa-ishi, which belonged to Richii Baba, to the Crespi Bonsai Museum.

Top left: Keisho-seki stone of Emilio Capozza, merit note.

Top right: Keisho-seki stone of Andrea Zambelli, second classified.

Bottom left: Hakkaisan-seki of Lorenzo Sonzini, special prize Kunio Kobayashi.

Middle right: Toyama Kotaro-ishi stone of Igor Carino, merit note.

Bottom right: Keiryu-seki stone of Donato Paco, merit note.



Exhibition venue: Min Hsuan Lo leads visitors on a tour of the exhibit.

Back to WanJing Art Garden

The 25th TBCA Bonsai Exhibition & Competition

By Min Hsuan Lo & Andrew Lo, Taiwan

Photography by Huang Rung Tsan (黃榮燦)

Our heartfelt appreciation goes out to President Zhan You Xian (詹有閒) and Secretary Chief Chen Zhen Yu (陳貞聿) for their unwavering commitment to TBCA (Taiwan Bonsai Creators Association 中華盆栽作家協會). We extend our gratitude to the diligent efforts of past leaders and members who have steadfastly supported TBCA over the years.

Since its inception in 1998, the Taiwan Bonsai Creators Association has annually showcased the art of bonsai through exhibitions. Over the course of 26 years, TBCA has exhibited in various locations in the middle and southern regions of Taiwan, guided by the decisions of the president and committee. Unfortunately, the exhibition faced a hiatus in 2021 due to the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Fortunately, in 2023, with the pandemic gradually subsiding, the bonsai exhibitions have made a triumphant return, continuing their tradition.

The exhibition took place from October 14 to 19, 2023, marking the third time that TBCA has chosen Wanjing Art Garden (萬景藝苑) as the venue. Situated in Xizhou, Changhu, Taiwan, Wanjing Art Garden is renowned as one of the region's premier gardens, founded by Mr. Chen Chan Xing (陳蒼興). Besides hosting two Flower & Tree Expos (花與樹博覽會) in 2002 and 2004, the garden is a perennial host of an extensive bonsai exhibition every Lunar New Year, drawing thousands to celebrate the New Year and Spring Festival. Notably, the garden has also been the site for two significant international events: the 10th ASPAC in 2009 and BCI/ASPAC in 2017. The prospect of more prestigious international bonsai conventions gracing this venue in the future is eagerly anticipated.

TBCA serves as an essential platform for bonsai creators. Young artists undergo a rigorous examination process to earn recognition as bona fide bonsai artists. A distinctive rule within TBCA stipulates that "Every bonsai exhibited must be styled by the artist themselves." This rule has significantly contributed to TBCA's reputation and stands as a crucial factor in the rapid growth of bonsai art in Taiwan. 🌳

The following pages feature some of the trees on exhibit.



Top and middle: Wanjin Art Garden is on 5 hectares and features collection of rare native Taiwan trees, Chinese pavilion, ponds, bonsai and an art museum.

Bottom: TBCA and friends at the Opening Ceremony.



Pinus thunbergii 黑松
(*Pinaceae* 松科)
100cm
JHOU WEI-CHEN 周渭臣



Celtis sinensis (席飾) 毛朴
(*Ulmaceae* 榆科)
22cm
Premna serratifolia 壽娘子
(*Verbenaceae*)
WANG JHAO LIN 王兆麟



**TBCA stipulates
that “Every
bonsai
exhibited
must be styled
by the artist
themselves.”**



Diospyros ferrea 象牙樹
(*Ebenaceae* 柿樹科)
82cm
CHEN HUEI-JI 陳惠記



Gardenia jasminoides Ellis 黃
梔子
(*Rubiaceae* 茜草科)
86cm
YU CING-YUAN 余慶源

Pinus morrisonicola 五葉松
(*Pinaceae* 松科)
85cm
JHAO WUN-JHONG 趙文中



Ficus microcarpa 榕樹
100cm
YU KUN-SONG 余昆松





Zelkova serrata 櫟樹
(*Ulmaceae* 榆科)
86cm
LIAO YI-FAN 廖逸凡

Bougainvillea spectabilis 九重葛
(*Ninaceae* 紫茉莉科)
100cm
LO RUEI-BEN 羅瑞本



Celtis formosana 石朴
(*Ulmaceae* 榆科)
88cm
JHU CHANG-YUAN 朱長淵



Juniperus chinensis 真柏
(*Cupressaceae* 柏科)
90cm
HE YONG-YU 何永裕





Juniperus chinensis 真柏
(Cupressaceae 柏科)
88cm
HE YONG-YU 何永裕



Juniperus chinensis 真柏
(Cupressaceae 柏科)
92cm
LI JHU-YU 李竺育

Tatsumaki Tornado

A Bonsai Legacy Unveiled

By Joe Grande, Canada

Photos courtesy
Bjorn Bjorholm,
Eisei-en Bonsai



Preserving Bonsai History: Tatsumaki/Tornado's Tale in Print

Dear BCI Readers, Every tree carries a unique story in bonsai's captivating world, often hidden within its branches and roots. Today, I invite you, our esteemed readers, to embark on a journey that encapsulates the essence of bonsai artistry, dedication, and the bitter-sweet beauty of fleeting moments.

Recently, I had the privilege of experiencing Bjorn Bjorholm's moving video on Tornado—an awe-inspiring bonsai that embodies a tale of resilience, growth, and the passage of time. The emotional depth conveyed in Bjorn's narrative left me awestruck, and it is with this profound sense of connection to the bonsai community that I offered Bjorn, the custodian of Tornado's legacy, an opportunity to immortalize this extraordinary bonsai's story within the pages of the BCI Magazine. In collaboration with Bjorn, we document the journey of Tornado. This bonsai has become more than just a living work of art—it is a testament to the intertwining of nature, skill, and the profound impact of time on living masterpieces.

In an age where the future of digital media's archival potential remains uncertain, print has endured as a time-tested medium for preserving knowledge and stories. With its rich tradition and commitment to the bonsai community, the BCI Magazine stands as a

repository of timeless narratives. It is a medium that not only graces the hands of our dedicated members but also finds a place in public libraries across the USA and Canada and in our member club libraries.

The plan was simple—Bjorn graciously shares the high-resolution video file of his recent post on Tornado, and together, we craft an article that etches Tornado's tale into the annals of bonsai history. This article will serve as a tribute to the artistry and devotion poured into this magnificent bonsai, ensuring that its story is not confined to the digital realm but lives on within the tangible pages of our beloved BCI Magazine.

As the editor of *Bonsai & Stone Appreciation Magazine*, I have witnessed the power of print to transcend time. Articles dating back to the early days of our organization continue to be requested, reminding us of the enduring value of printed narratives. Your support for our print medium is invaluable, and your engagement keeps the spirit of bonsai alive in the pages of our magazine.

I thank Bjorn for accepting this proposal and supplying additional photos. I appreciate the opportunity to collaborate on a project that will not only celebrate Tatsumaki/Tornado but also contribute to the rich tapestry of bonsai stories cherished by our readers.

Joe Grande
Editor, *Bonsai & Stone Appreciation Magazine*

**Bjorn
envisioned
Tatsumaki
as Eisei-en's
defining
masterpiece.**

Top: In 1988, Kimura submitted a wild-collected shimpaku juniper, estimated to be seven hundred years old, to the Sakufu-ten, an annual bonsai competition whose top award is bestowed by Japan's Prime Minister. Kimura's "Toryu-no-mai," the "The Dance of a Rising Dragon," won the top prize. Photo © Jonathan M. Singer. From *Fine Bonsai: Art and Nature* (Abbeville Press).

Middle: The Itoigawa Juniper Bonsai called "Hiryu" translated as the "Flying Dragon" was designated as the symbol of the 8th World Bonsai Convention. This amazing Juniper, placed in a special tokonoma, was collected in 1983 and eventually landed in the hands of Mr. Saburo Kato who skillfully designed it into its present shape. This juniper, is estimated to be about a 1000 years old. Photo © Sujata Bhat



In the intricate world of bonsai, each artist aspires to cultivate that one tree destined to become the defining masterpiece in their collection. For Bjorn Bjorholm, a distinguished bonsai professional and the founder of Eisei-en in Tennessee, this dream materialized in the form of the extraordinary *Juniperus monosperma* named "Tatsumaki." It embodies not only artistic brilliance but also the enduring spirit of legacy.

Inspired by iconic bonsai trees like the "Toryu-no-mai" in Kimura's Bonsai Garden, the "Flying Dragon" Juniper in Omiya Bonsai village, the Trident Maple Forest by Mr. Takeyama of Fuyo-en nursery, and the masterwork Itoigawa juniper "Hiryu" created by Saburo Kato at Mansei-en Nursery, Bjorn envisioned Tatsumaki as Eisei-en's defining masterpiece.

Tornado-Inspired Deadwood

While the name for this majestic bonsai is Tatsumaki, meaning tornado in Japanese, it's more than just a name; it's a reflection of the mesmerizing deadwood that adorns this living masterpiece. The apexes on Tatsumaki are a captivating amalgamation of various twisted apexes, intricately arranged in spirals reminiscent of a tornado's dynamic energy.

Tatsumaki's deadwood stands as a testament to the forces of nature and the artistry involved in transforming adversity into a thing of beauty. The multi-apex twists and spirals not only contribute to the tree's unique aesthetic but also symbolize resilience and the dynamic



Bottom: This massive one-seed juniper or *Juniperus monosperma* was collected in 2015 by Richard Le on his private property in the four corners area of New Mexico. It was collected at an elevation of approximately 4,500 feet in what essentially amounts to a desert environment.



essence of a tornado—a natural phenomenon that mirrors the captivating journey of this extraordinary bonsai.

Tatsumaki's journey began in the rugged landscapes of New Mexico in 2015 when Richard Le collected this massive one-seed juniper from his private property. Weighing approximately 800 pounds, the tree arrived at Eisei-en in 2018, a blank canvas awaiting its transformation.

The initial year was devoted to nurturing Tatsumaki's health and fostering robust growth, laying the foundation for its subsequent metamorphosis. In 2019, during an online course with Bonsai Empire, intricate Shari was introduced within the live vein, and the basic branch structure was meticulously established. Yet, a pivotal challenge surfaced—the absence of a suitable apex.

Undeterred, Bjorn allowed the tree to flourish throughout the growing season in Nashville, fostering runner growth and reinforcing its overall health. The subsequent year marked the successful establishment of a new apex, a testament to the patience and strategic vision invested in Tatsumaki's development.

Top: Tatsumaki's arrival at Eisei-en, exhibiting potential for a defining masterpiece.

Middle: Eisei-en Grand Opening in 2018. Bjorn, middle, flanked by Naoki Maeoka left, and Mauro Stemberger, right.

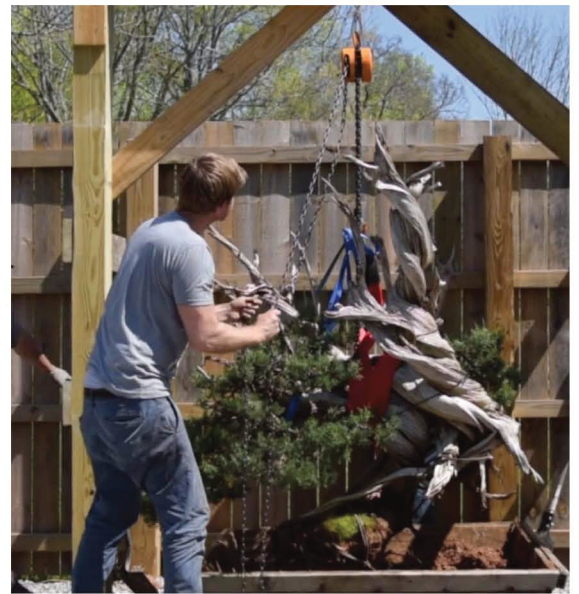
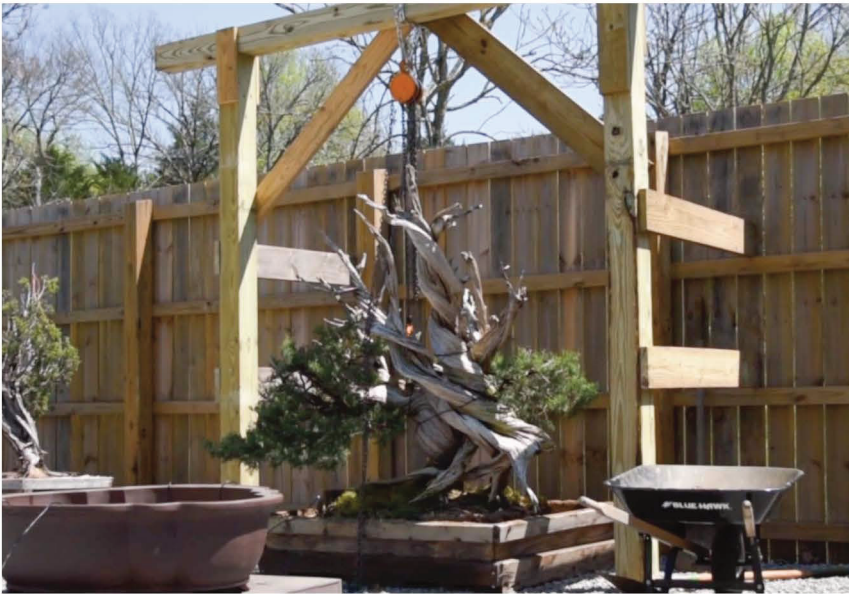
Bottom: Bjorn, third from the left, and Eisei-en friends, autumn, 2018, before styling Tatsumaki.

Facing page:

Working on the deadwood while protecting the foliage from heat and lime sulphur.



In 2019, during an online course with Bonsai Empire, intricate Shari was introduced within the live vein, and the basic branch structure was meticulously established.



The spring of 2020 witnessed a pivotal moment as Tatsumaki transitioned from its original wooden box to a final ceramic pot. This undertaking demanded ingenuity, with a gantry crane constructed to lift and lower the tree, showcasing the dedication of Bjorn's apprentice and local assistance from John Cole, a potter in Nashville.

Thriving during the summer of 2020, Tatsumaki displayed remarkable growth, paving the way for a comprehensive restyling in the winter of that same year. What sets this bonsai apart is not only its aesthetic allure but also the communal effort invested in its evolution. Approximately 50 to 60 students at Eisei-en, part of intensive programs, have contributed to the tree's development, adding layers of complexity to its deadwood and participating in pruning and wiring.



Approximately 50 to 60 students at Eisei-en, part of intensive programs, have contributed to the tree's development, adding layers of complexity to its deadwood and participating in pruning and wiring.

While bidding farewell is bittersweet, Bjorn envisions Tatsumaki's enduring association with him, Eisei-en, and Nashville, Tennessee, forming a lasting legacy for the bonsai community in the United States.





As Eisei-en undergoes relocation to Kyoto, Japan, Tatsumaki embarks on a new chapter. Purchased by a discerning collector in Milwaukee, this masterpiece is poised to grace a new audience, ensuring its continued presence. While bidding farewell is bittersweet, Bjorn envisions Tatsumaki's enduring association with him, Eisei-en, and Nashville, Tennessee, forming a lasting legacy for the bonsai community in the United States. In the true spirit of bonsai creativity, Bjorn's Tatsumaki becomes a symbol of artistry, dedication, and a shared journey of growth. This legacy tree leaves an indelible mark on the rich tapestry of bonsai history, embodying the essence of the bonsai craft. 🌳



The Adventures of Red A Bonsai Enthusiast's Tale

By Andrea Brusa, Italy

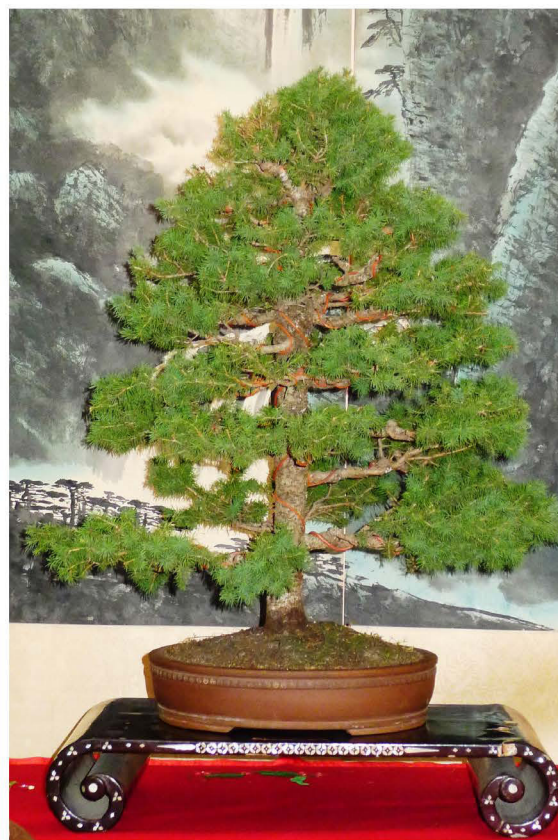
When Master Bandera asked me to pen a few lines about what the Chokkan red spruce symbolized for me in the article, I must admit I felt a certain unease. This unease stems from the fact that, unfortunately, I am not a master, nor can I confidently label myself as an expert in this exquisite art. I am, however, an ardent enthusiast. So, in my capacity as an enthusiast, I aim to convey the emotions woven into this “journey of experience”—the evolution of my bonsai, born serendipitously.

Let's commence with the name, a shared attribute among Red and his twelve brethren adorning the same balcony. He goes by the name “Red,” for reasons that are self-evident. Just this ritual, I speculate, might disqualify me in the realm of experts (... sigh). Red made his entrance during the Christmas festivities of 2008, procured from a shelf in the supermarket near my home, all thanks to an intuition. The master had recently released a compendium on the diverse styles of bonsai art, and I was captivated by the meticulous framework of the Chokkan style. Witnessing this 4-year-old arboreal presence within an inconspicuous plastic vessel, I perceived (or was it intuition?) a

form that seemed to echo familiarity—a “potentiality” yet to unfurl.

Thus, I pondered, “Why not?... It's just €4.99. Trying won't cost a thing.” Once home, I bestowed upon him a name and allowed him to burgeon and endure throughout 2009 within his container, gauging his potential. True to expectations, he did not disappoint. He burgeoned and fortified himself to such an extent that, come March 2010, I summoned the master, proposing a collaborative venture, a “gamble.”

Hence, we can assert that the journey—following a year-long “cohabitation trial”—commenced at this juncture. The subsequent trajectory is contingent upon time and the fortuitous discovery of apt guidance. A master may not have chosen to accompany me on this expedition, and independently, I certainly wouldn't have traversed far. Yet, Master Bandera demonstrated exceptional patience and expertise, steering us through the intricacies: from adjustments and wiring of branches (reiterated on numerous occasions) to pot transpositions and counsel on enhancing its grandeur. Even the fertilization and pest control regimen, skipping which warranted a gentle rebuke!



In identifying the crux of this experience, I would distill it down to three keywords: time, availability, and pride. Time, as the growth of a bonsai is a departure from our world, meticulously structured around appointments, deadlines, and obligations. In this realm, everything functions in harmony with a developmental pace that resists acceleration. Time belongs to “Red,” and one can only stand by him, synchronizing with “his” tempo, basking in this experiential odyssey.

Availability is paramount, epitomized by the master who, with finesse and affability, aligns himself with an enthusiast—nurturing passion without overbearing, but rather, facilitating and guiding it.

Pride surfaces when I reflect upon photographs documenting our initial stages and current stature; a profound sense of gratification envelops me, knowing that I am an integral part of Red’s narrative. Envisaging where we’ll stand in another 14 years becomes a captivating exercise. As the master asserts, “Bonsai are immortal, not belonging to us; we can merely accompany them for a segment of their existence, presenting them more resplendent to the succeeding generation.” This lesson, even for a humble enthusiast such as myself, is one I embrace with dedication, intending to bequeath it to my daughters—whether they willingly accept the legacy or not! 🌲



CRAFTING A DAIZA

A Support for Appreciating a Stone

By Pierre Leloup, Canada

Throughout history, humans have been fascinated by stones. Symbols of hardness and longevity, slowly shaped by nature, they transcend time and invariably command respect in a category distinct from precious and semi-precious stones. The stones used in suiseki, carefully selected for their patina, texture, or evocative shapes, are especially revered in the East. However, who hasn't picked up a pebble on the beach? Stone collecting for suiseki is gaining momentum in the West.

Here, we'll explore the creation of a daiza, a support that positions and highlights the chosen stone. The stone I've selected comes from the central Quebec region.

Following the carving process, are some of my viewing stones. To see more of my stones, please visit <https://pierreleloup.com/suiseki/>



1-3. To begin, the stone must be cleaned with a brush, water, and soap. For certain stones, using acid may enhance texture and colors. **Caution:** limestone should not be left in acid for too long to avoid dissolution. Some stones can be rubbed with a cloth and oil; I use lemon oil. Purists may opt for daily hand rubbing without oil, requiring patience but resulting in a magnificent patina!

4-5. The daiza is carved from hardwood, with various options like cherry, black walnut, and ash. Local woods like cherry, black walnut, and ash are my preferences. The daiza's thickness depends on the stone's height and mass, requiring a ratio for optimal stone-daiza harmony. Experience matters.

6-11. The next step involves outlining the stone and hollowing the base, the most complex and time-consuming task. Precise stone-daiza fitting yields a more beautiful overall result. I use various tools: Dremel, wood chisels, sandpaper, and sometimes a router for flat stones. Caution is needed to avoid slipping.





Natural stones hold more value; thus, cut stones are less valuable. The more complex the underside, the more challenging crafting the daiza becomes. Patience is key: carve, place the stone, adjust, and repeat until the fit is perfect and the stone is stable. **Note:** some artisans use duplicating machines for wood carving, simplifying the process. I prefer a manual approach, adding value to the object.

12–14. Outlining. I cut the stone's shape in the wood using a scroll saw, leaving a border.

15–16. Correcting a hollow or notch in the stone is sometimes necessary. Instead of deepening it, I attach a piece of wood to the daiza.

17–19. Tracing and shaping the feet. Foot placement depends on the stone's form. In the illustrated daiza, I placed feet at corners and added others under vertical lines corresponding to the stone's peaks, accentuating relief features and enhancing stability.

20–21. Finishing. The daiza is now carved. Typically, a layer of stain followed by two to three coats of oil yields a beautiful result. For the daiza shown, I chose two layers of black lacquer, creating an unusual appearance with a contemporary glossy finish.





22. In the last step, I stamp my signature (chop) to the base.
23–24. The final result showing the formal front. A viewing stone from the central Quebec region that evokes cliffs and waterfalls. 🌲

Viewing Stones from the Pierre Leloup collection. All bases carved by Pierre Leloup.



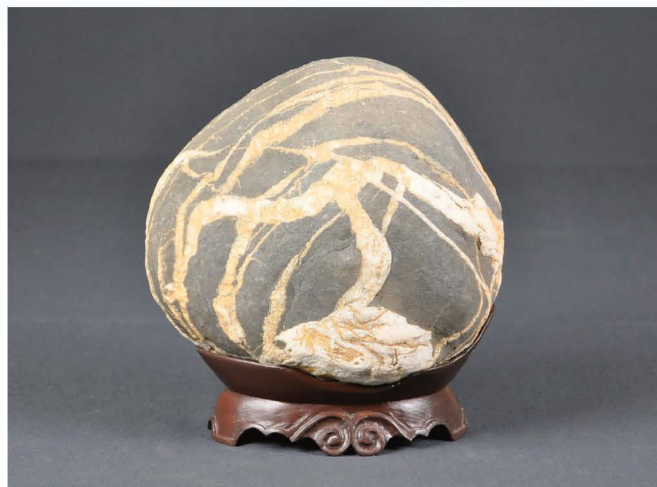
Top left: Human-like Figure stone from Quebec. h 10" x 6" x 4" ash wood

Top right: Plateau landscape or Shelter stone from Quebec. h 7" x 11" x 5" cherry wood

Middle right: Plateau landscape stone from Quebec. h 4" x 9" x 8" ash wood

Bottom left: Figure stone From Quebec. h 9" x 5" x 3" cherry wood

Bottom right: Water pool stone from Quebec. h 4" x 12" x 9" ash wood



Top left: Abstract stone from Vancouver. h 6" x 12" x 4" ash wood

Top right: Pattern stone from Greece. h 7" x 4" x 3" cherry wood with detail of base

Middle left: Landscape stone from Quebec. h 4" x 9" x 3" cherry wood

Bottom left: Landscape stone, Origin Asia. h 5" x 12" x 5" cherry wood

Bottom right: Pattern stone from Quebec. h 7" x 8" x 5" cherry wood



Top left: Object stone from Quebec. h 8" x 4" x 3" cherry wood



Top right: Cliff landscape from Quebec. h 7" x 12" x 7" ash wood



Middle: Water stone from Quebec. h 4" x 12" x 6" ash wood

Bottom: Object stone from Quebec. h 8" x 13" x 5" ash wood





Top left: Cliff landscape from Quebec. h 9" x 7" x 5" ash wood
Top right: Object stone from Quebec. h 7" x 6" x 4" cherry wood
Bottom: Cliff landscape from Quebec. h 5" x 18" x 5" ash wood.



BCI Award of Excellence at the AIAS National Congress.

By Aldo Marchese, Italy

Mimmo Abate, daiza maker, who was awarded the BCI certificate as the best suiseki at the XXVI National Congress AIAS (Associazione Italiana Amatori Suiseki) for the stone on display in Forlì at the XXVI National Congress AIAS 2023.

Mimmo Abate's considerations:

"Being a stone seeker for future suiseki, a few years ago in early summer, I found this stone. Analyzing its sides, it immediately conveyed a strong emotion to me.

I intuited its potential but had to understand in what scene I could represent it in an exhibition. I started the search, but with no great results, I began its cleaning; fortunately, the weather had done most of the work, and soon after, the base of the daiza.

Meanwhile, as I progressed, the mythological scene of the creation of Japan, that of Izanami and Izanagi,

began to flash in my mind. As soon as I typed on the search engine, the scene of both creators with the first island of Onogoro appeared, identical to my stone. From that moment on, the search for the kakejiku began, made to order because it should not have the stone in the design to avoid repetitions, but only the two creators armed with the celestial spear creating our beloved Japan. To give a historical connotation, I chose the name Yamato, which combines the historical aspect of the narrative with the imperial descent of the kami.

Any suiseki exhibited correctly becomes the main element of an evocative scene if there is awareness of the ultimate purpose of what one wants to represent, in a simple and refined way." 🌳

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15. Extent and Nature of Circulation		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
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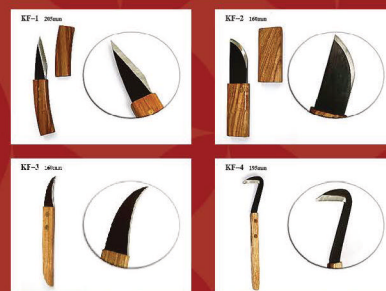
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Top left: BCI's 2nd Vice President Min Hsuan Lo, Taiwan. Photo © Gudrun Benz.

Top right: Bjorn Bjorholm, USA/ Japan. Photo © Bjorn Bjorholm.

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